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Notes," all brief, by Professor Grandgent, on passages in the *Vita Nuova* and the *Divina Commedia*.

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## PROVENÇAL LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE. I.

1. *Mirèio, poème provençal de Frédéric Mistral*. Édition publiée pour les cours universitaires par EDUARD KOSCHWITZ, avec un glossaire par OSKAR HENNICKE et le portrait du poète. Marburg, Elwert; Paris, Le Soudier; Marseille, Ruat, 1900. 8vo., pp. vii A, xliii, 436. Price, 7.20 marks (bound, 8 marks).

I think that one of Professor Elliott's scholars already gave, some years ago, in the *Modern Language Notes*, an account of Professor Koschwitz's Grammar of Modern Provençal (No. 2). But it seems to me necessary and very desirable to mention here once again this extremely useful book in connection with the other works in which the learned professor of Königsberg treats, in German or in French, of Provençal literature.

There is apparently something quite inspiring and exalting in the study of the poetry and language of modern Provence. Even Mr. Koschwitz, generally cool, reserved, critical, often severe, harsh and aggressive, when he speaks of French literature, of phonetics and phoneticians, of reform and reformers of modern language instruction, seems to be carried away in some measure by the charm of those gentle poets who like to be called, rightly or wrongly, the successors and heirs of the troubadours. He appears to forget the natural tendency or inclination of his critical mind, whenever he deals with their works and describes their genius and talent. He doubtless submits joyfully to the softening influence of the powerful sun of Provence, whose glory his friends, the *Félibres*, never tire to sing in their beautiful verses.

"Lou soulèn me fai canta"

(Le soleil me fait chanter).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mistral, the greatest of the Provençal poets, has chosen these words for his motto or device. He sings in praise of the "Great Sun of Provence" in his famous *Chant du Soleil* (Lou Cant d'ou Soulèn):

"O Prouvènço, toun sòu, ta lengo, toun soulèn,  
Noun i'a rên de plus gai, de plus dous, de plus bèu."

(Oh Provence, il n'y a rien de plus gai, de plus doux, de plus beau que ton sol, ta langue, ton soleil).<sup>2</sup>

No wonder that Mr. Nicolaus Welter, the biographer of Mistral and Aubanel (Nos. 4, 5), a genuine poet, *ein Dichter von Gottes Gnaden* himself, shows that inspiring influence of the "Great Sun of Provence" in every line of his prose, in every verse of his metrical translations. Indeed, both of his works are delightful books, exceedingly well written and worthy, in every respect, of a poet and scholar. The reader's interest never slackens; he cannot help being fascinated from beginning to end, and unwillingly lays them aside without finishing them at once. I read Mr. Welter's books in two long, uninterrupted sessions, which has rarely happened in my experience as a reader and critic.

The first time my attention was called to Mistral's *Mirèio* and other works of the *Félibres* was in Professor E. Böhmer's *Colleg* or lectures upon Provençal at the University of Halle. This distinguished Romanist was, I think, the first foreigner who studied the language and literature of modern Provence thoroughly and was able to speak intelligently and with authority about the *Félibres* and their poetry. He published his interesting and well known monograph upon *Die provenzalische Poesie der Gegenwart* in 1870 (Heilbronn). Since that time, the literature of the *Félibres* has grown and developed immensely in quantity and in quality, their cause (*la cause*) has passed through

Wenn auch deine Gluten sengen,  
Nahst du auf dem Flammenthron,  
Feiern dich mit Hymnenklängen  
Arles, Marseille und Avignon.  
Steig' empor, o Sonnenpracht!  
Scheuch' die Seuchen und die Nacht!  
Schnell, schnell, schnell  
Sprudle, goldner Strahlenquell!

—Welter, "Frederi Mistral," p. 167.

I have quoted these verses in German, because I have not the Provençal text at hand, and, also, in order to give the reader a sample of Welter's translations.

<sup>2</sup> This is the motto of the *Félibrige*, placed near a star, the emblem of this society of Provençal poets, on the "Provençal national envelopes," which Victor Lieutaud tried to spread among the peasants of his native country. See Welter, "Frederi Mistral," p. 276.

many various phases, the reputation or glory of the principal poets of the *Félibrige* has been firmly established in France and abroad,—and the conditions under which the language and literature of modern Provence could be studied by foreigners, have changed considerably and to great advantage.

1. I remember that, when I read *Mirèio* in the original for the first time, I found it very hard work. I was glad to be aided by my knowledge of old Provençal, which, however, cannot be considered a very safe guide, on account of the origin of the modern literary language (see No. 2), and to make use of the author's French translation, which fortunately is good, correct and literal at the same time. This translation accompanies every page of the Provençal text in Charpentier's edition.<sup>3</sup> Such an arrangement is doubtless very convenient, and seems very practical. But it has its drawbacks. It is very likely and even certain that many readers, abroad and in the North of France, got or get their knowledge of Mistral's great poem only from the French text.

Prof. Koschwitz deserves our praise and gratitude for having given us the first suitable edition of *Mirèio* for university courses, and for having furnished us the means of studying the provençal text of the poem thoroughly and scientifically and of examining and understanding it under all its various aspects. It is no longer necessary to guess the meaning of grammatical forms; and there is scarcely any grammatical difficulty that is not fully explained in one of the paragraphs of his grammar (No. 2). I just notice one form about the use of which the author neglects to give us any information: *Anessias pas (N'allez pas)*, *Mirèio*, vi, 417. It would be interesting to know why Mistral uses here the imperfect subjunctive of *anar* instead of the present subjunctive with the negation.

Apart from grammatical difficulties, everything is well explained in the edition itself.

The literary introduction (pp. i–xliii) is excel-

lent: it prepares the reader for a thorough study of many questions connected with *Mirèio*; it contains a short history of the *Félibrige* or Society of the *Félibres*, of which Mistral is one of the founders and the foremost and most illustrious champion, also some information about the condition of the Provençal language and literature after the invasion of the Northerners and the victory of the King of France in the thirteenth century, and about the precursors of the *Félibres*, and, finally, a good appreciation of Mistral, the poet, and *Mirèio*, the poem. But there is very little original work or research, on the part of the author, in the whole introduction. This is frankly admitted by Koschwitz himself in his Preface (pp. iv A, v A). According to his own statement, the first part of the Introduction (pp. i–xx) is nothing but an almost verbatim reproduction of an article upon the *Félibrige* written by M. Mariéton, published in the *Grande Encyclopédie* and reprinted by this author, with additional notes, in his *Précis de l'histoire des Félibres*, the third chapter of his *Provence Nouvelle*, 1550–1900. Moreover, the second part (pp. xx–xxviii), which treats briefly of Mistral's life and works and presents him as poet, chief of the *Félibrige*, inaugurator of a "national" cause, scholar, and creator of a new literary language, is an extract of a part of Gaston Paris' brilliant essay, that appeared in the *Revue de Paris*, 1894, I, 478 ff. and II, 58 ff., and was reprinted in his *Penseurs et Poètes*, Paris, 1896.

In the last and most important part of the Introduction (pp. xxviii–xliii), which deals with *Mirèio*, the editor cannot help expressing some personal views and opinions about the literary value of the poem and other questions connected with it. But also here, he apparently owes a great deal to Gaston Paris' essay. "Je l'ai fait," says he in the Preface, p. v A, "non sans marcher, ici encore, sur les brisées de M. G. Paris." I will mention a few of the interesting points treated briefly, but with very good judgment in this part. the epical and descriptive character of the poem; the narrative, and the description of the natural scenes of Provence, and the life of its people; the sentiment of nature, and the primitive conception of animals and inanimate objects; influence of Homer; the epical style, repetitions, comparisons, epithets; the supernatural; the language, syntax, vocabulary; versification, verse and strophe; the

<sup>3</sup> The first edition of *Mirèio* appeared in 1858, Seguin, Avignon. Prof. Koschwitz says in his introduction, p. xl, that Charpentier published his first edition of the famous poem in 1888. I possess a much earlier edition: *Mireille, poème provençal de Frédéric Mistral, avec la traduction littéraire en regard*; Paris, G. Charpentier, éditeur; Avignon, Roumanille, libraire, 1878.

lyrical character of *Mirèio*; the three lyrical poems inserted in the epical narrative: the song of the *Baile Sufrèn* (I, 204 ss.), the song of *Magali* (III, 393 ss.), and *Mirèio's* prayer (X, 190 ss.); the artistic unity of the epopee: Mr. Giesebrecht's vain attempt of comparing *Mirèio* with Dante's *Divine Comedy* and of finding mystic and transcendental thoughts and symbolic truths hidden in Mistral's poem.

The text has been thoroughly revised in the new edition. It is as good and as well adapted to the needs of the student as the text of a living author can be arranged by the care and skill of a philologist of Dr. Koschwitz's capacity. The spelling has been regulated according to the standard of the official orthography of the *Félibres*, such as is followed by Mistral in his *Trésor du Félibrige* (Lou Tresor dóu Felibrige, ou dictionnaire provençal-français, 2 volumes, Aix-en-Provence, Avignon, Paris, 1878-1888).

The foot-notes which accompany the text are excellent. They form a short valuable commentary giving exactly what a student, foreigner or Frenchman of the North, wishes to know about the topography, manners, customs, beliefs and superstitions of Provence in order to be able to understand immediately all the allusions of the poet. But many, perhaps most, of these notes are borrowed from Mistral himself: they are found at the end of the different cantos of his poem in Charpentier's edition. Dr. Koschwitz has added a large number of other explanatory notes taken from various sources, especially from Maass's useful thesis *Allerlei provenzalischer Volksglaube, nach F. Mistral's Mirèio*, Berlin, 1896, and from Mistral's large dictionary, *Lou Tresor dóu Felibrige*.

The foot-notes, generally speaking, do not explain grammatical difficulties (see above). The editor sometimes refers, in them, to his grammar (No. 2). The foot-note, IX, 301, contains an explanation, regarding the syntactic use or omission of the negation, which seems to me highly objectionable. The text of the verse reads:

*Coume un que, de sa vido, a touca l'estrumen.*

["Comme un homme qui, de sa vie, n'a touché l'outil" or "comme un homme qui n'a jamais touché l'outil."] Dr. Koschwitz says: "La suppression de la particule *pas* (a *pas* touca) est permise dans les phrases relatives dont le sens négatif

n'admet pas de doute." This explains nothing. The adverbial expression *de sa vido* is used as *jamai* (French *jamais*) and does not require *pas*. Cf. I, 295:

*E si vidi marin jamai l'an pu vist!*

[et ses vieux marins jamais ne l'ont plus vu!]

I, 330:

*Nautre, sourtèn jamai de noste pijounié!*

[Nous, nous ne sortons jamais de notre colombier!] The negative meaning of *de sa vido* is perfectly clear, since the expression precedes the verb. Cf. the rules concerning the negation in Spanish.

Every expert knows that Mistral's language is particularly difficult on account of its vocabulary. This vocabulary, although based on that of a popular dialect, the language spoken by the people in and near Orange, Avignon and Aix, is exceedingly rich; and many of its words are of unknown or obscure origin, of strange formation, and not to be found, it would seem, in French and other literary Romance languages. The *Glossaire*, therefore, must be considered a very valuable addition and a very important, perhaps the most important, part of Dr. Koschwitz's edition. It is the work of Mr. Oskar Hennicke. It is well done, and nearly complete. The author is indebted for a great many explanations and renderings to Mistral's *Trésor du Félibrige* as well as to the poet's French translation of *Mirèio*, which I have mentioned above. On the other hand, he seems to have worked independently in many ways. Prof. Koschwitz's aid and advice must have been of great service to him, in the composition of the glossary, in so far as he has generally refrained from giving hazardous and worthless etymologies, in which beginners, bibliophiles and dilettanti often delight. Mr. Hennicke is sincere and courageous enough to confess his ignorance very frequently, and to mark numerous words by adding *or (igine) inc (onnue)*.

My critical account of Prof. Koschwitz's new edition of *Mirèio* may be summed up in the following words, which we find at the end of his preface, p. vii A:

"D'après ce que nous venons de dire, notre édition est, dans toutes ses parties, une œuvre de collaboration, et je n'en suis pour ainsi dire que le rédacteur en chef."

A. RAMBEAU.

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